From: Karl Uzar
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 9:41pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom it May Concern:

I think the proposed settlement "against" Microsoft is rediculous. The purpose of the antitrust trial was to force Microsoft to allow competition from the likes of Linux and Apple. The settlement does very little to further this.

Here's what I'd like to see:

1. Well-documented, freely released APIs and file formats. No exceptions for companies or groups that "don't have [what Microsoft considers] a valid business model."

2. A substantial fine -- something that would make Microsoft think a little. $25 million dollars at least.

3. Reduced OEM licensing restrictions. Does Gateway want to sell a machine with both Windows and Linux (ie. dual-booting)? Fine, more power to them. Netscape insead of Internet Explorer? Go ahead. And OpenOffice.org over Microsoft Office? Bring it on!

4. The OEM shouldn't be required to place icons for installed Microsoft products on the Desktop, either.

5. Some legal definition of "Operating System" should be established, and it should be fairly conservative. A definition of "Computing Package" should be established as well; this would include everything you need to do basic work on a computer (operating system, productivity/office suite, Web browser, e-mail application, etc.) Right now, Microsoft is selling a computing package passing for an operating system. There's nothing wrong with selling a computing package, but no one should be forced to pay for and use it when all they want is the operating system.

6. Microsoft must release any information made known to it regarding computer security. "Security through obscurity" is a really bad idea, because someone else will invariably independently hit upon the same security flaw and exploit it. Remember when servers running Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS) went down with Code Red and its variants, costing companies billions? What if Microsoft knew about the hole weeks before the virus hit, and didn't bother to patch it? The Information Technology industry desparately needs some measure of accountablity from Microsoft.

7. Tying in to number 5, some form of oversight committee should be

established, and it should be staffed with people who have computer knowledge. _PC Magazine_ columnist John C. Dvorak has announced his "candidacy," and he wouldn't be a bad choice. Granted, you don't want people who are vehemently anti-Microsoft, but you don't want yes-men (or -women) either. The committee's job should be to ensure that Microsoft doesn't violate the settlement, and to resolve disputes without resorting to litigation.

Thank you for taking the time to read these comments. No matter what the final decision is, it is good to make one's voice heard.

Sincerely,

Kevin Riggle